

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office action dated May 26, 2009 has been received and carefully considered. By this amendment, claims 1, 7, and 11 are amended. No new claims have been added, and claims 5-6 and 14 are canceled. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-4, 7-13, and 15-20 will be pending. In view of these amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. The basis for the claims as presented herein are the claims as submitted with the corresponding Article 19 amendments in the International phase.

35 USC §102

The Office rejected claims 1-5 and 11-14 as being anticipated by Doerges et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,504,449). With respect to claim 1, the applicant agrees and amended the claim as shown above. With respect to claim 11, the applicant disagrees, but nevertheless amended claim 11 in view of the rejection over McNamara (*infra*).

As amended, claim 1 now recites all elements from dependent claims 6 and intervening claim 5 which was deemed allowable by the examiner. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-5 as being anticipated by Doerges et al. should be overcome.

With respect to claim 11, it is noted that this claim expressly requires that *the first and second hydrogen sulfide-enriched solvents from the respective absorbers must be combined to form a combined stream that is fed to a regenerator*. Moreover, amended claim 11 additionally requires that *hydrogen sulfide is removed in a regenerator from the first and second hydrogen sulfide-enriched solvents to thereby form the hydrogen sulfide-rich product gas, of which a first portion is fed to the second absorber*. These elements are not present in Doerges et al., and the rejection should therefore be overcome.

The Office also rejected claims 11-12 as being anticipated by McNamara et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,356,161). The applicant disagrees, especially in view of the amendments herein.

As amended, claim 11 expressly requires *separation of a portion of a hydrogen sulfide-rich regenerator overhead product gas in a second absorber, and removing in the regenerator*

hydrogen sulfide from the first and second hydrogen sulfide-enriched solvents to thereby form the hydrogen sulfide-rich regenerator overhead product gas. These elements are not present in McNamara et al., and the rejection should therefore be overcome.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office considered claims 9-10 allowable. The applicant agrees and maintained the claims unchanged. The Office further considered claims 6-8 and 15-17 allowable. The applicant again agrees and amended claim 1 to now include all elements of claim 6. With respect to claims 15, these claims depend on amended claim 11. Claims 15-17 were maintained unchanged.

Request For Allowance


Claims 1-4, 7-13, and 15-20 are pending in this application. The applicant requests allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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